

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A cast-cutter for use in removing a cast from a patient, the cast-cutter comprising:

a body;

cutting means ~~supported by the body~~ comprising first and second portions supported by the body, said second portion being pivotally mounted relative to the first portion and moveable along an arcuate path towards the first portion, each portion comprising at least one cutting edge which in use cooperate to produce a shearing strain in a material positioned therebetween and adapted for cutting a portion of material from the cast by a shearing action; and

a protection member supported by the body and adapted to be positioned between the cutting means and the patient, to protect the skin of the patient,

wherein the cutting means is adapted to cut material by a shearing action by the interaction of first and second portions.

2. (Original) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means is adapted for removing a strip of material from the cast.

3. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protection member is supported by the body via a connecting member which is coupled at one end to the body and at another end to the protection member.

4. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the connecting member is adjustable in order to vary the distance between the body and the protection member.

5. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protection member is releasably coupled to the body.

6. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protection member comprises a contact surface for contacting the skin of a patient when the cast-cutter is in use.

7. (Original) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 6, wherein said contact surface is smooth in order to reduce the friction between the contact surface and the skin of a patient.

8. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 6, wherein the contact surface has a substantially planar surface.

9. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 6, wherein the contact surface has a curved surface.

10. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protection member comprises tapered edges in order to be smoothly guided under a cast.

11. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protecting member has a leading edge tapered on at least one side.

12. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 11, wherein a leading edge of the protecting member is tapered on both sides to form a wedge profile.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently amended) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim ~~13~~ 1, wherein the first and second portions of the cutting means each include a single cutting edge.

15. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means comprises a first portion defining an aperture having a cutting edge, and a second portion having a cutting edge and adapted to be received within said aperture.

16. (Original) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 15, wherein the first portion defines two apertures each having a cutting edge, and the second portion defines two elements each having a respective cutting edge and adapted to be received with a respective aperture of the first portion.

17. (Original) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 16, wherein the apertures are elongated slots and are aligned parallel to each other.

18. (Currently amended) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim ~~13~~ 1, wherein the first portion of the cutting means is stationary, and the second portion is moveable.

19. (Currently amended) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim ~~13~~ 1, wherein the first portion is located on the protection member.

20. (Currently amended) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim ~~13~~ 1, wherein the first portion is mounted separately from the protecting member.

21-23 (Canceled)

24. (Currently amended) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim ~~13~~ 1, wherein the respective cutting edges of the first and second portions are provided as inserts which are secured to the first and second portions respectively.

25. (Original) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 24, wherein the inserts are releasably secured to the respective first and second portions.

26. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means are adapted to shear discrete fragments of material from a cast.

27. (Original) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 26, wherein discrete fragments of material removed from a cast are passed through the second portion of the cutting means and subsequently ejected at a location removed from the point of cutting.

28. (Original) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 26, wherein discrete fragments of material removed from a cast are ejected from below the cutting means.

29. (Original) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 26, wherein discrete fragments of material removed from a cast are ejected from the rear of the cutting means.

30. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means are adapted to shear a continuous strip of material from a cast.

31. (Currently amended) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim ~~13~~ 1, wherein a leading edge of the second portion of the cutting means is chamfered.

32. (Currently amended) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim ~~13~~ 1, wherein the first portion defines an aperture which is chamfered at one side.

33. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means is adapted to remove both discrete fragments and continuous strips of material from a cast.

34. (Currently amended) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim ~~13~~ 1, wherein the cutting means is adapted to remove continuous strips of material from a cast and the first portion of the cutting means comprises a strip exit to allow a strip of the cast which is being removed to pass therethrough.

35. (Currently amended) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim ~~35~~ 34, wherein the strip exit comprises tapered sides, which sides taper outwards, away from the aperture of the first portion.

36. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means is operated by electric drive means.

37. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means is operated by hydraulic drive means.

38. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cutting means is operated by pneumatic drive means.

39. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cast-cutter further comprises a normally open activation switch.

40. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cast-cutter comprises a safety switch which has to be activated before the cast-cutter can be operated.

41. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cast-cutter further comprises a safety guard disposed around the cutting means.

42. (Original) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 41, wherein the guard is permanently fixed in place.

43. (Original) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 41, wherein the guard is retractable.

44. (Original) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 43, wherein the guard includes a safety switch such that the cast-cutter may only be operated when the safety guard is positioned correctly in place.

45. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 41, wherein the safety guard is substantially transparent.

46. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cast-cutter further comprises means for collecting the sections of a cast which have been removed.

47. (Original) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 46, wherein the collecting means comprises a container releasably attached to the body portion of the device.

48. (Original) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 46, wherein the collecting means is a separate receptacle located remote from the cast-cutter and connected thereto by a conduit.

49. (Previously presented) A cast-cutter as claimed in claim 1, wherein cast-cutter comprises extraction means to assist in drawing fragments or strips of cast material away from the cutting means.

50. (Currently amended) A method of removing a cast from a patient, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a cast cutter having shearing cutting means and a protecting member, wherein the cutting means is adapted to cut material by a shearing action by the interaction of first and second portions, said second portion being pivotally mounted relative to said first portion and movable along an arcuate path towards the first portion, each portion comprising at least one cutting edge which in use cooperate to produce a shearing strain in a material position therebetween;

placing the protecting member adjacent to the skin of the patient such that the protecting member is located between the skin of the patient and the cutting means;

aligning the cutting means with an end of the cast; and

activating and moving said cast-cutter along the length of the cast to remove a strip of material therefrom, allowing the cast to be removed from the patient.

51. (Original) A method of removing a cast from a patient as claimed in claim 50, the method further comprising the steps of:

placing the protecting member of the cast-cutter adjacent to the skin of the patient and aligning the cutting means with an alternative end portion of the cast; and

activating and moving the cast-cutter along the length of the cast to allow the cast to be removed in two portions.

52-66 (Canceled)